



Legislative Bulletin.....May 2, 2007

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H.R. 1429 — Amendments to the Improving Head Start Act of 2007

H.R. 1429, the Improving Head Start Act of 2007 (sponsored by Rep. Kildee, D-MI), is scheduled to be considered on the House floor today, May 2, 2007, subject to a structured rule ([H.Res.348](#)), allowing one motion to recommit with instructions. Below is a summary of the amendments made in order by the rule. Amendments are debatable for 10 minutes, unless otherwise noted. Note: Summaries are based on RSC staff's review of *actual amendment text*. For a summary of the underlying bill, see a separate RSC document released earlier in the week.

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Johnson, Eddie Bernice (D-TX). Amends the Career Ladder Partnerships with Tribal Colleges and Hispanic-Serving Institutions program in the underlying bill to requires the Secretary of HHS to create partnerships between Head Start agencies and Historically Black Colleges and Universities, to work to increase the number of associate, baccalaureate, and advanced degrees in early childhood education that are earned by Head Start staff and parents of Head Start students. Also requires those receiving grants under this program to work in a Head Start agency for the amount of time they received the assistance.

Price (R-GA). Creates a new grant program through which eight states could establish a demonstration program to coordinate with the education programs of local educational agencies to prepare children for kindergarten. The following programs would be included in the coordinated efforts: Early Reading First, Even Start, public pre-kindergarten programs, Head Start, Ready-to-Learn Televisions, and programs under the Child Care and Development Block Grant.

States would be required to contribute 5% of the total amount expended under this program, and the amendment states that assistance received through this program should not “supplant any non-federal state or local funds that would otherwise be used for activities” authorized by Head Start. States applying to participate in this program would be required to submit a plan to the Secretary of HHS outlining certain required details of their plan to coordinate services. Parents would be allowed to choose the preschool program they want their child to participate in.

According to the sponsor's office the demonstration program would allow “states [to] leverage their pre-K resources with federal monies to improve coordination, prevent duplication and expand the number of children that can be served. Safeguards are in place to ensure that participants receive services that are as good as or better than those in Head Start, and the states have to match federal

funding to guarantee adequate funding levels.” In addition, according to the sponsor’s office, “Based on eligibility requirements, ten states plus the District of Columbia are qualified for the demonstration program: Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, New Jersey, New York, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Texas.”

According to the [Committee Report](#), this amendment, which was offered (and failed) in Committee, is similar to a provision included in H.R. 2123, the Head Start reauthorization bill passed by the House in 2005.

Sestak (D-PA). Authorizes such sums as necessary for the Secretaries of HHS and Education **to create a program to forgive Stafford loans** for Head Start and Early Head Start teachers who commit to being a Head Start teacher for three years, earned a bachelor’s degree in a field related to early childhood education, and are not defaulting on the loan they want to have repaid by the federal government. Allows for loans of up to \$10,000 to be forgiven. **Some conservatives may be concerned that this amendment will create a new program that forgives the loans of certain Head Start teachers.**

Hirono (D-HI). Strikes the current provisions related to technical assistance and evaluation of Early Head Start Program, and directs the Secretary of Education to monitor the operation of Early Head Start programs. Requires that 10% (up from 5% in the underlying bill) of Early Head Start appropriations be used for this technical assistance program. Directs the Secretary, in reserving funding for the program, to consider the “new programs serving pregnant women, infants, toddlers, and their families.” Requires that some of the funding for the program be used to make grants to organizations with specialized expertise in relating to infants and toddlers and that have the capacity to provide direction for a national training and technical assistance program. Directs the Secretary to enter into contracts with states that have demonstrated expertise in delivering services through the Early Head Start program, and to ensure that each state has one, full-time specialist with expertise in the development of children under the age of three and programming for pregnant mothers. **Some conservatives may be concerned this amendment would increase the funding set-aside for the Early Head Start technical assistance program, and place significant emphasis on providing services to infants, toddlers, parents, and pregnant mothers, instead of providing educational tools for children ages three through five, who are preparing to enter kindergarten.**

Mica (R-FL). Changes the date, from September 2011, to September 30, 2009, in the underlying bill by which the Secretary has to certify that at least 50% of all Head Start teachers meet certain degree requirements.

Kennedy(D-RI)/Hall (D-NY). Adds a new definition to the bill--defining “inclusive classrooms” as a Head Start classroom that include both children with disabilities and children without disabilities. Requires the Secretary, in allocating funding through the technical assistance program for Head Start, to “assist Head Start agencies and program to increase the capacity of classroom staff to meet the needs of eligible children in inclusive classrooms.”

Putnam (R-FL). Strikes the section of the bill that requires the development of an application review system and the creation of an expert panel, and requires that all applicants be automatically required, every five years, to reenter the competitive process to receive Head Start grants.

Porter (R-NV). Requires that Head Start grantees, before hiring an individual to: 1) conduct an interview; 2) verify their personal and professional references; and 3) obtain either a state, federal, or tribal criminal record check in all jurisdictions where the grantee provides services; a state, federal, or tribal criminal record check as required by the jurisdictions where they provide services; or a criminal record check as otherwise required by federal law.

Carnahan (D-MO). Allows Head Start grantees, in any year that appropriated amounts for Head Start do not exceed the previous year's appropriation for the program, to "negotiate" with the Secretary, a reduced funded enrollment level without receiving a reduction in funding. Directs the Secretary to set up a process through which grantees can negotiate, and requires the Secretary to notify grantees of their "right" to negotiate if the increase in funding does not take place. **Some conservatives may be concerned that this amendment would allow Head Start grantees to essentially provide decreased services if funding for the Head Start program does not increase every single year. In addition, some conservatives may be concerned that this amendment would encourage Congress to continue to increase funding for the Head Start at a rate in which it might not without this provision.**

Cuellar (D-TX). Adds to the report required to be submitted to Congress on limited English proficient children in Head Start, a requirement that the states or Head Start agencies describe the type of assessment used to determine the rate of progress made by students with limited English proficiency.

Shuler (D-NC)/Ellsworth (D-IN)/Loeb sack (D-IA). Inserts several sense of Congress regarding faith-based organizations, including the following:

- Many community- and faith-based organizations have expertise in moving individuals and families from dependency to self-sufficiency by providing families with the tools and skill they need to participate in the community and contribute to our economy;
- Community- and faith-based organizations have participated in Head Start programs since the enactment of the Head Start Act in 1965 and continue to serve more than 90,000 children and their families; and
- Parents have an integral role in the development and implementation of Head Start programs, community- and faith-based providers of Head Start services employ parents and encourage parents to volunteer in the programs because parents are children's most important and influential teachers.

The amendment also adds a provision stating that "faith-base and community-based organizations continue to be eligible, *on the same basis as other organizations*, to participate in any program" under Head Start and Early Head Start (emphasis added). **Some conservatives may be concerned that by requiring that faith-based groups participate in Head Start "on the same basis as other organizations," this amendment would continue to deny these groups their right (granted by to Title 7 of the Civil Rights Act) to take religion into account in their hiring practices.**

Currently, faith-based organizations receiving Head Start grants (approximately five percent of all Head Start grantees), are required to forfeit their right to include religious preferences in the hiring process. According to Committee Report 109-136, an amendment was offered in Committee by Mr. Fortuno that would have allowed faith-based organizations that receive Head Start funding to be able to hire individuals based upon religious affiliation or belief. The amendment failed (19-26). In addition, Mr. Fortuno submitted this amendment to the Rules Committee, but the Majority is not allowing the full House to consider his amendment. **It is important to note that the Shuler amendment is NOT the same as the Fortuno amendment.** The Shuler amendment affirms current law, and the Fortuno amendment would have allowed faith-based groups to hire individuals based up on religious affiliation or belief.

Space (D-OH). Expands the criteria for the allocation of resources for technical assistance and training to require that the program provide assistance to “address the unique needs of programs located in rural communities,” including removing barriers related to teacher retention, developing innovated staff, removing barriers to providing services to parents and families, and to providing health screenings in rural areas to participants. Also requires the Secretary to consider the needs of rural and urban areas when entering contracts with entities in each state for the purposes of technical and training assistance.

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